The Cube: Annual General Meeting, held on 23rd January 2025

Trustee report 2025 delivered by Dawn o' Connell, Chair of Trustees

There will be lots of good things you will be hearing about in this report and during the evening from across the range of work we do with young people in Market Harborough. For anyone who has been involved in youth work for any period of time, it can often feel uncertain and continually changing with the ebbs and flows of whatever is going on in the lives of young people. It definitely feels like that here at HYACT. Just as one thing gets sorted, so another crops up and it can feel exhausting.

AGMs are very much about looking at where we are, what we have done and accounting for the money we have spent, but I would like to take this opportunity to think about the opportunities we see for the charity. We have a great building, and we would like to maximise the number of young people and the number of hours it is used specifically for the under 18s in our town. We have partnerships with our local secondary schools and are present every week running groups and meeting young people. We would like to be in each school every day. We are providing subsidised access to counselling and last year we delivered 487 sessions where specialist counsellors met with young people. We would like to have a counsellor present in every school in Market Harborough.

HYACT is currently reviewing how the charity is governed. Over the last year this has seen us updating our charitable aims, recognising we need a bigger trustee board, seeking new trustees and consulting with our historical stakeholders. As a charity we are under resourced to carry out all the activities we need to do and as trustees we feel it is limiting our ability to grow. We operate with a small staff team leaving us with some very important gaps and leading to the trustees being more involved in the day-to-day activities than they signed up for.

This situation is not sustainable and as a charity it is limiting our growth and ability to make the most of the resources available to us. Towards the end of last year, the trustees reviewed how to move forward and contacted and appointed the Cranfield Trust who provide charities like HYACT with pro-bono support. Their first recommendation is for them to work with us to complete a feasibility study on the options available to us. We will work with a consultant who will be our guide and support us in implementing any changes to the way the charity is governed.

I wonder what these changes might look like. There are other charities in our local area who we could seek to work more closely with. Whilst we remain open to new opportunities it is important to HYACT that The Cube building remains a resource for youth work in Market Harborough. It is also important to us that the work we do continues to make a difference in young people's lives. And, most importantly, that young people stay at the centre of all decisions regarding the direction of the charity.

There have been many trustees of the charity since its conception in 2005, in addition to those currently serving. Together they have done tremendous work in leading the charity through different challenges, successes and transitions. Whilst it is not an expectation that the current trustees will continue to serve in the longer term, they are committed to support this next transition for HYACT.

As we continue 2025 with the direction of the Cranfield Trust be assured of our openness, where appropriate, to share progress. We welcome questions and comments from staff, parents, funders, local churches and other interested parties.

Trustee Board
Harborough Youth and Community Trust